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Vol. 11, No.4

# LAFAYETTE VISTAS

# VISTAS CELEBRATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Ten years ago, the median price of a house in the San Francisco Bay Area was $262,400, *Barbara* Bush was the First Lady, and *Lafayette Vistas* was born. This issue of the *Vistas* celebrates a decade of publications with a look back at the development of the newsletter, an "inside" look at *Vistas*, and a review of some of the topics that were newsworthy enough to make *Vistas* headlines.

LAFAYETTE: A COMMUNITY FILLED WITH VOLUNTEERS
LAFAYETTE'S MUNICIPAL BUDGET
LAFAYETTE GEARS UP FOR EMERGENCIES
UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY: LEIGH CREEKSIDE PARK
Nickelodeon's Big Help Volunteer Week
WANTED: HARD WORKERS! NO PAY, GREAT BENEFITS!
SPECIAL INSERT
COUNCIL PLACES POLICE MEASURE ON NOVEMBER 3RD BALLOT
SPECIAL EDITION
PROPOSED "DOWNTOWN PROJECT"
$4.4 Million Project Would Improve Traffic Flow
Who Was Lafayette?
PROPOSAL FOR NEW LIBRARY, CITY HALL
STREET BEAT
POLICE & FIRE MERGER UPDATE
"SMALLTOWN DOWNTOWN"
GREEN LIGHT FOR "BART BLOCK," MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
PG&E WORKS WITH CITY ON DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
LET'S KEEP THESE SECRETS!!

# Vistas' Tenth Anniversary Special

## A False Start

Lafayette took its first stab at a municipal newsletter in October, 1991. At the time, the City Council was facing two significant policy issues. The first — how to fund and develop parklands in Lafayette — led the Council to create a Blue Ribbon Task Force and, eventually, to a huge public hearing at Stanley School. The second — how to spend up to $19 million in regional transportation money — was making political waves throughout Lamorinda and the County. While both issues were controversial, many Lafayette citizens weren't well informed about them or their larger implications.

To address the situation, the Council decided that a municipal newsletter should be published and sent to all residents. The original, and still guiding, purpose for the newsletter was to provide an in-depth introduction to the issues facing the City and to invite people to participate in the public decision making process.

CITY OF Lafayette

October 1991 — A newsletter for Lafayette residents — Volume 1 No. 1

We're moving our offices

Do we need parks?

Where is the City Moving?

The first attempt, 1991

For the first issue, City staff contracted with an amateur newsletter designer. While we accomplished our goal of providing necessary information, we felt that the presentation was not up to the high quality standard that Lafayette citizens demand and deserve. We knew we needed help and starting searching for a competent professional to design and manage *Vistas*. We found Quin Coursey and she has been *Vistas*' graphic designer, project manager, and guiding light since delivering her first issue to the post office in early spring, 1992. If you enjoy receiving and reading *Vistas*, you reap the fruit of Quin's good work.

Articles in *Vistas* are usually written by a contract writer, but are heavily edited by city staff. So as to avoid any conflict of interest, City Councilmembers do not participate in writing, editing, or assembling the newsletter in any way. In fact, the first time Councilmembers see each issue is when they open their mailboxes, just like you.

You might have noticed that, even though they play a large role in Lafayette's municipal doings, we never mention our elected officials in *Vistas* articles. Why? Because California state law prohibits the mere mention of Councilmembers' names in newsletter articles that are funded by taxpayer dollars. However, the law does allow us to include city councilmembers in a directory, and we do so, with phone numbers and e-mail addresses, on the back page of every issue.

## Our First Real Issue – and Beyond

As we were recovering from our slightly embarrassing first attempt, the Oakland hills caught fire. Many of our residents called, particularly those living in wooded areas, asking for suggestions about preventing such an occurrence in Lafayette. Thus, the cover article of the first "real" *Vistas* was entitled, *"The Burning Question: How can local residents avert a Lafayette firestorm?"*

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

THE BURNING QUESTION ABOUT YOUR HOME

How can local residents avert a Lafayette Firestorm?

Top 10 Firepoofing Tips

VISTAS is born, 1992

Since that time, *Vistas* covers and articles have been a mix of hard news, community color, background information, and a sense for the city's history.

Major news items we've covered have included the State's budget problems (1992); the Road and Drain Bond Measure (1995); land use planning for the Lafayette Town Center, Oakwood Athletic Club, and LaFiesta Square developments (1997); the controversy surrounding the proposed Palos Colorados residential development (1997); and the acquisition of Leigh Creekside Park (1999).

We've also spotlighted various civic organizations that differentiate our community from others, including the Lafayette Arts and Sciences Foundation, the Futures Explored school for people with developmental disabilities, burton valley.com's efforts to create a wired community, and the arrival of classical music to Lafayette via the Gold Coast Chamber Players.

To provide an inside look at the inner workings of the municipal government, we instituted a series of "Gov. 101" articles. Over the years we've delivered a primer on the city's redevelopment agency, discussed how sales taxes are collected and distributed, and dissected the city's mission statement. Last winter we devoted an entire issue to a description of Lafayette's budget — where the money comes from and where it goes. The local taxpayers' association was pleased with that one. And we've periodically introduced you to new members of the city staff, so, hopefully, that face behind the counter or voice on the phone will not be a stranger to you.

With the help of the Lafayette Historical Society, we've written eight articles over the years describing Lafayette at different times during its 150-year development. The "Historic Snapshots" column is one of our favorites, and we've covered a wide variety of topics, including "Who Was Lafayette", "Elam Brown Arrives", the development of the Lafayette Reservoir, and suburban architecture and land use in the 1950's and 1960's.

We've occasionally thought about re-running some of the historic articles for the benefit of newcomers to the community, but it seems that there is still so much history that we've not yet covered. In the future, look for "Historic Snapshots" columns describing the City's incorporation drive and its first City Council.

Every so often, when a local public policy issue is highly controversial or otherwise deserves extra-special attention, we'll spend a little bit extra to print a "**Special Edition**" logo in red ink across the masthead at the top of the newsletter. We've only done this three times in ten years, for the following issues:

1995: "Council Places Road and Drain Measure on March 7th Ballot" (it passed);

1998: "Council Places Police Measure on November 3rd Ballot" (it failed);

2000: "Proposed 'Downtown Project" faces Council vote (it was approved and constructed).

*(continued on next page)*

## Vistas Challenges

Part of the challenge behind *Vistas* is keeping it relevant and timely. Our design-to-delivery timeline is generally six to eight weeks, so we're not in the position, like newspapers, to deliver the most up-to-date news. We do, however, strive to keep current issues on the face of Vistas in order to make the newsletter relevant to our readers' lives.

We all make mistakes, and the *Vistas* staff is no exception. Our biggest mistake, however, was a doozy. We published a "special insert" in the Fall, 1998 *Vistas* devoted to a factual — or so we thought — presentation of issues related to a police tax measure. After reading the issue, however, a sharp-eyed citizen called the City to report that certain data published in the *Vistas* appeared to be incorrect, and that he felt the error was large enough to materially affect the election. After double-checking and reconciling our conflicting data sources, we determined that he was right. So, with just days to go before the election, we worked around the clock to mail out a postcard to all residents with correction data. It was a hard way to learn a good lesson about fact checking.

The *Vistas* issue that generated more phone calls and e-mail messages than any other — by a wide margin — was the one we published in Summer, 2000. The cover article, *"Lets Keep These Secrets"* was a compendium of our favorite places in Lafayette, including the Reservoir rim trail, the Brook Street Tot Lot (which, incidentally, has brand new play equipment), and Johnny's Donuts. Well, we probably shouldn't have been surprised to learn that Lafayette residents are an opinionated and not altogether secretive bunch, and many people fired off e-mails, letters and faxes sharing all of *their* secret Lafayette places. In a follow up issue we listed many of those new secrets for all to enjoy.

## The CAPIO Award

One thing that we take particular pride in and that we hope differentiates *Vistas* from other municipal newsletters is our willingness to cover local issues in depth and with honesty. We try to present issues fairly, and to reveal all of their complexities. Largely because of our in-depth coverage, *Vistas* was recognized in 1996 by the California Association of Public Information Officials and awarded "Best Municipal Newsletter for all cities in California with a population under 75,000."

It was nice to win the award, but we also recognize that the newsletter could be improved. Please take some time to tell us what you think of Vistas by filling out the survey below. If you have items or story ideas for future *Vistas*, you can send them to City Hall via e-mail (cityhall@lovelafayette.org), snail mail, or fax.

# Around Town

**Oct 19 & 20** **AMOUR POUR LA FRANCE** – The Gold Coast Chamber Players present their first concert of the 2001/02 season with this tribute to France. Music for flute, harp & viola by Debussy, Saint-Saens, Telemann and others. Info: 283-3728. Tickets: Town Hall box office 283-1557.

**Oct 20** **COMMUNITY RUMMAGE SALE** – One day only, Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building. 8th annual rummage sale by the Lafayette Juniors. You'll find lots of great bargains! Proceeds benefit programs that serve local children and families. Info: 376-5804.

**Oct 28** **LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR RUN** – 7am registration, 8am start. Run wild around the beautiful reservoir and through the streets of Lafayette, all to benefit Lafayette schools. Info/registration: 284-7404

**Nov 1–25** **RAVENSCROFT** – The second play in Town Hall's 2001/02 season, A mystery that will leave you guessing! Tickets: 283-1557.

**Nov 6** **CITIZEN OF YEAR DINNER** – Come honor Lafayette's leading light! 6:15pm, Lafayette Park Hotel. Call 284-7404 for info.

**Nov 16** **THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY BREAKFAST** – Join more than 100 of your neighbors to celebrate all that is good in our community. A wonderful event! Location/reservations: 284-7404.

**Nov 30** **HOSPICE TREE LIGHTING** – 6 to 7pm, Lafayette Circle at Mt. Diablo Blvd., near the Roundup Saloon.

**Dec 13 – Jan 6** **TOWN HALL PRESENTS A SPECIAL HOLIDAY SHOW** – New feature will bring youngsters & oldsters to the old Town Hall for an evening of holiday enjoyment. Info: 283-1557.

**Jan 19 & 20** **KEY TO A PIANO** – Gold Coast Chamber Players celebrate unveiling of a grand piano at Town Hall with a night of Beethoven and Brahms. The Mayor will officially unlock & dedicate the new piano for its use and enjoyment by the community. Info: 283-3728. Tickets: Town Hall box office 283-1557.

# VISTAS SURVEY

Help us make *Vistas* even better!

Please give us your thoughts on how we can improve *Vistas* to make it more interesting and relevant to Lafayette citizens.

| *Please rate the following:* | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Informational Value | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Layout | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Timeliness/Frequency | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*Please give us any additional comments you may have:*

_____

_____

_____

You may send your completed surveys to P.O. Box 1968, Lafayette, CA 94549, fax them to 925-284-3169 or fill out a survey on the web at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us

*Please rate the following articles and features that have appeared in Vistas with regard to your interest in the information included:*

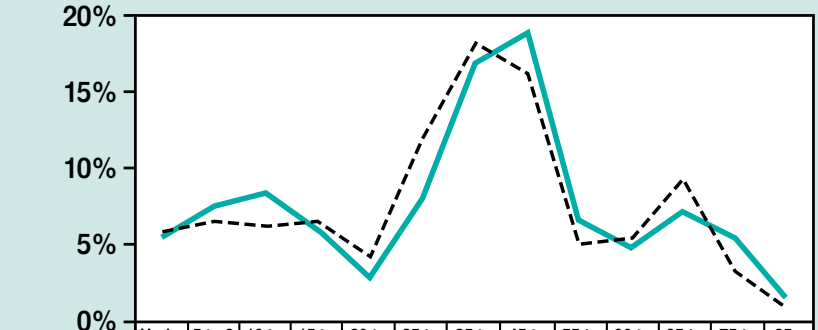
| | Not Interested < | | | > Very Interested |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lafayette's Municipal Budget | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| City Staff Profiles | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Creek Information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Historic Snapshots | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Citizen & Volunteer Profiles | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Updates on Capital Improvements | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Status of City Projects | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Around Town (Event Calendar) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Features on City Departments | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| City Business Profiles | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Community Announcements | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# CENSUS 2000

We recently received first-round results from the 2000 census, so we'll cap off this tenth anniversary *Vistas* special with some highlights of Lafayette's demographics that describe how our population has changed over the past decade.

- There are about four hundred more people living in Lafayette now than there were in 1990. Our population rose from 23,501 to 23,908 during the decade. While many come and go, overall we add about 13 families each year — not exactly what you would call a high growth community!
- There are fewer young adults and more middle-aged people. As the chart below indicates, Lafayette is dominated by residents between the ages of 25 and 55; they make up almost half of our population. Only 3% of Lafayette's total population is aged 20 to 24 years old.

**There are more teens, fewer young adults, more middle-agers, and older seniors.**




| | Under 5 yrs | 5 to 9 yrs | 10 to 14 yrs | 15 to 19 yrs | 20 to 24 yrs | 25 to 34 yrs | 35 to 44 yrs | 45 to 54 yrs | 55 to 59 yrs | 60 to 64 yrs | 65 to 74 yrs | 75 to 84 yrs | 85+ yrs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 Census | 5.5% | 7.5% | 8.4% | 6.0% | 2.9% | 8.0% | 16.9% | 18.8% | 6.7% | 4.9% | 7.3% | 5.5% | 1.6% |
| 1990 Census | 5.8% | 6.6% | 6.2% | 6.5% | 4.3% | 12.1% | 18.2% | 16.2% | 5.1% | 5.4% | 9.3% | 3.4% | 0.9% |

- Lafayette added about 900 kids but dropped 470 adults over the decade. Younger adults are declining in the population while older adults wait longer to have children or move to Lafayette with children. Perhaps high local real estate prices and Lafayette's great schools drive this phenomenon.
- Despite higher life expectancies, Lafayette's total senior population — around 3,300 — has not changed. About a fifth of the "newly graduated" seniors who in the past might have chosen to stay are instead moving out of the Lafayette community.
- Lafayette's average household size is 2.6 persons — up from 2.2 in 1990.
- Ethnically, Lafayette is increasingly diverse, but still mostly caucasian. Caucasians make up 87% of the population (down from 93% in 1990) and Asian-Americans account for 8%. More than 3% identify themselves as "two or more races", and the remaining 2% is split between a variety of races.
- Perhaps most surprising: 23% of Lafayette's housing units are occupied by renters. There's a perception that Lafayette is a city made up entirely of homeowners; this is largely but not entirely true.

If you would like more detail on Census 2000 results, please send an e-mail with your request to cityhall@lovelafayette.org.

## CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: **284-1968**

### *Council Members*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ivor Samson | **Mayor** |
| Don Tatzin | **Vice Mayor** |
| Carol Federighi | **Council Member** |
| Erling Horn | **Council Member** |
| Jay Strauss | **Council Member** |

For messages to **all** Council Members: **Ext. 907**

### *Administration*

| | |
|---|---|
| **General Reception and** | **284-1968** |
| **Steven Falk, City Manager** | **Fax: 284-3169** |
| Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir. | **299-3227** |
| Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr. | **299-3213** |
| Joanne Robbins, City Clerk | **299-3210** |

### *Community Development*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ann Merideth, Director | **299-3218** |
| Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr. | **284-1951** |
| Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr. | **284-1976** |
| Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr. | **299-3214** |
| P.W. Hotline (to report problems) | **299-3259** |

*If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.*

### *Lamorinda School Bus Program*

| | |
|---|---|
| Juliet Shanks, Analyst | **299-3216** |
| | **Or 299-3215** |

### *Parks and Recreation* **284-2232**

| | |
|---|---|
| Jennifer Russell, Director | |
| Yvonne Ozorio, Senior Services | **284-5050** |
| Teen Programs | **284-5815** |

### *Police Services*

| | |
|---|---|
| Emergency: 24 Hours | **911** |
| Police Dispatch: 24 Hours | **284-5010** |
| Police Business Office: | **283-3680** |

*Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement, Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3232 X 2205*

### *Addresses* **Fax: 284-3169**

| | |
|---|---|
| Street Address: | **3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210** |
| Mailing Address: | **P.O. Box 1968 Lafayette, CA 94549-1968** |
| Website: | **www.ci.lafayette.ca.us** |

**E-MAIL:** Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using the following address format:

**First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org**

**Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org**


**City of Lafayette**
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**Lafayette, CA 94549-1968**


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